

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000900

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SA, P, PA
SA/INS (BRENNIG, DEAN) SA/PD (SCHWARTZ, SCENSNY, ROGERS,
STRYKER);

E.O. 12958:N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [KISL](#) [OIIP](#) [PREL](#) [CE](#) [MV](#)

SUBJECT: Outreach on Newsweek Retraction of Koran
Desecration Story

REFTEL: State 90992

1. Reaction in Sri Lanka and the Maldives to the original Newsweek story about alleged desecration of the Koran was muted and low-key. Media in both countries ran straight wire service reports about the controversy, but abstained from publishing or broadcasting outraged commentary and editorials. Main newspapers in Sri Lanka today reported on Newsweek's retraction. There have been no public demonstrations in either country to date.

2. Post immediately put up the Secretary's May 12 statement on our mission web site after we received the transcript. On May 16, we sent copies of the Secretary's statement and A/S Boucher's remarks on the subject to the Maldivian Foreign Ministry. On May 17, we sent those two items plus the May 16 New York Times story detailing Newsweek's retraction to all major Maldivian media.

3. Comment: Given the lack of any noticeable anger or concern over the original story, post opted not to take a very pro-active approach to responding lest we turn a non-story into an issue among the Muslim community. We have now publicized the magazine's retraction in the Maldives, and do not expect any negative fallout from the original allegation either there or in Sri Lanka. End comment.

Lunstead